

Marblehead Disabilities Commission  
Meeting Minutes – May 13, 2021

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Preston Ford, Katie Farrell, Amy Hirschkron, Ed Lang, Cheryl Lalond, Sue Harris

Guests Present (who consented to be identified): Teri McDonough, Tim Shotmeyer, Rich Ramos

Laurie called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

1. The minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting were approved, as amended.
2. Housing. Teri McDonough, of the Marblehead Housing Authority, described existing housing for seniors and individuals with disabilities that funded by the State and administered by the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority is developing a survey of residents in this housing and asked for the Commission's input on any questions we think should be included. Ms. McDonough acknowledged that accessibility of buildings and units varies widely. Fewer than 50% are accessible or even close to ADA compliant. The Housing Authority is working on the issue and puts some of its capital improvements budget each year toward adding accessibility features. A centralized waiting list of this housing is administered by the State, so the Authority is unable to give priority to Marblehead residents who apply for it; the waiting list can be several years. The Housing Authority has applied for a grant to fund a feasibility study for new low-income housing in town (the former Coffin School is one possible location). Teri expressed a desire to work with the Commission on matters of mutual concern.
3. Harbor Access. Laurie discussed outstanding issues with the Harbors and Waters Board and harbor access. She noted that the Commission had received no response from its letter to the Board, sent in December 2020, requesting a meeting to discuss several issues. Also the only accessible entrance to the Harbor Master's office building is choked with weeds and still does not have keypad access. Finally, access to the dock is not ADA compliant. The Commission agreed to recontact the Board and to attend its next meeting with as many members as possible to discuss these outstanding issues and to request more information on the harbor update plan mentioned by Jason Silva at the Commission's last meeting.
4. 139 Pleasant Street. The renovated building t 139 Pleasant Street currently has an advertisement on its front door for an antique shop. Because the Commission previously opposed the granting of a variance of accessibility requirements for this location, the Commission agreed to further look into the current permit status of the building and this business.
5. Training. Laurie congratulated all members of the Commission who completed the 2-day Community Monitor Access Training provided by the Massachusetts Commission on Disability. The training was very comprehensive on applicable law regarding accessibility requirements and included detailed and extensive written materials.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 10 at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Harris, Commission Member

